cost, etc. In view of this, the Government constituted a Task Force to strengthen the co-operative credit structure, the report of which has been accepted by the Government for implementation. This is expected to bring overall improvement in the short-term co-operative credit structure thereby enabling them to reduce their lending rates.

Funding of Mega Projects

1532. SHRI SANJAY RAUT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any proposals under India Infrastructure Financing Company Limited (IIFCL) for funding mega projects from various State Governments, particularly the State of Maharashtra; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) No proposal has been received from Maharashtra.

(b) Does not arise.

Kisan Credit Cards

1533. DR.GYAN PRAKASH PILANIA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the criteria for issuing Kisan Credit Cards;

(b) the objectives for issuing these Cards;

(c) the number of farmers in Rajasthan eligible for Kisan Credit Cards;

(d) the number of Kisan Credit Cards issued to farmer of Rajasthan, till date since its inception, year-wise;

(e) the amount of money advanced to these farmers under this scheme, year-wise; and

(f) by when Government expect to cover all the farmers of Rajasthan under this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) and (b) The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme was primarily intended to cater to the short-term credit requirements of the farmers and the banks issued KCCs to farmers who

were eligible for sanction of production credit for cultivation purposes. However, the scope of the scheme has since been widened to cover other related purposes like term/working capital for agriculture and allied activities including a component for consumption needs. Now, the scheme also covers all eligible tenant farmers, oral lessees and share croppers. The main objectives of the schemes are to provide hassle free credit, to reduce the cost of borrowings and to bring down borrowings by farmers from informal sources like money lenders etc.

(c) to (e) The year-wise details of number of KCCs issued by all the banks and amount disbursed to farmers in Rajasthan since inception of the schemes are as under:—

(Rs. crore)

Year	No. of cards issued (Lakh)	Amount Disbursed
1998-1999	1.51	—
1999-2000	8.87	1479.22
2000-2001	4.93	1129.24
2001-2002	3.10	2108.34
2002-2003	1.84	1724.68
2003-2004	5.77	1263.59
2004-2005	8.75	3610.55
2005-2006 (till 31 Dec.2005)	2.03	1950.52
TOTAL:	36.83	13266.14

(f) Reserve Bank of India and NABARD have advised all banks to issue KCCs to all eligible farmers throughout India by 2005-06 crop season.

Shortage of Clerical Staff in Banks

1534. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Public Sector Banks are facing a shortage of 40,000 clerical staff in various banks all over the country; and

(b) if so, the steps Government propose to be taken to fill up the vacancies?